

IN THE KITCHEN WITH

Leemei Tan-Boisgillot



Leemei Tan-Boisgillot is an award-winning cookbook author, food blogger (My Cooking Hut) and photographer. She was born in Malaysia and spent most of her life living abroad. After more than a decade in London, she currently lives with her French husband in Hong Kong. Her debut cookbook won the Gourmand World Cookbook Awards for the “Best in the World” title in Best Blogger Cookbook.

What is your earliest memory in the kitchen?

I remember I was the 8-year old little girl who never failed to follow my mom to the kitchen - it wasn't the most beautiful or the newest kitchen but it was well equipped! The excitement I felt was unimaginable the first time she asked me to help prepare the ingredients for the dishes planned for that day, such as chopping onion, peeling and mincing garlic, and removing prawn shells. Even though it was to make really simple dishes like stir-fry vegetables,

fried rice or steamed fish; those were valuable skills and techniques I learned that helped make me the skilled cook I am today.

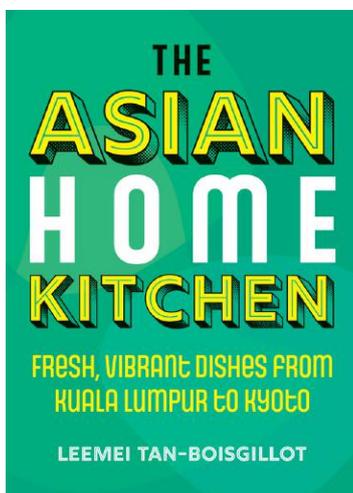
Share with us one of your favorite food hotspots (as well as location and why you love it!)

I do miss good Malaysian food once every blue moon. A restaurant called ‘Cafe Malacca’ in Hong Kong never disappoints me and will always remain close to my heart. They serve authentic and delicious Malaysian favourites such as Assam Laksa, Nasi Lemak, Satay and a few others to name. The taste is well balanced and authentic - it's so close to the flavours back home as if I was in Malaysia..

MORE INFORMATION

Instagram: @mycookinghut

Pre-order Leemei's book: smarturl.it/asianhomekitchen



THE ASIAN HOME KITCHEN

Fresh, vibrant dishes from Kuala Lumpur to Kyoto

Out on 14 June 2022.

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Traditional Asian home cooking – with a modern twist! A journey across a continent of incredible flavours and smells, ingredients and inspiration – this book brings together all the best home cooking, street foods, healthy fakeaways and crowd-pleasers in one award-winning collection.

THE QUICKFIRE ROUND

“I always swear by this faster way to shake off garlic skin”

WHAT IS A FOOD THAT MEANS HAPPINESS TO YOU?

I am a noodle person and I always welcome noodle soup or anything soupy! Especially during winter months - it warms up the body and brings lots of comfort! A bowl of Chicken Pho may look simple but with layers of flavours encapsulated in the soup, served with tender chicken pieces and fresh herbs surely brighten up my day! Another choice of mine that guarantees happiness is a bowl of spicy and sour Assam Laksa in rich and flavourful fish broth cooked with many different aromas. It never fails to bring a big smile on my face!

WHAT IS A SURPRISING/UNMISSABLE ITEM ON YOUR PANTRY?

It has to be pasta! It's such a great all-round ingredient that goes well with anything which never fails to make my family happy, especially my two boys! They could have just about anything with pasta. So, I always make sure I have different types of pasta in my pantry.

A RECIPE THAT REMINDS YOU OF HOME?

It has to be 'Nasi Lemak' - the national dish of Malaysia! It is such a versatile dish that lets you decide what you want to pair with fragrant coconut rice - be it curry chicken, fried chicken, 'sambal' squid or other types of seafood; then with hard boiled egg, crispy anchovies, 'sambal' and cucumber. I miss the very simple one consisting of coconut fragrant rice, crispy anchovies, cucumber, a boiled egg, and delicious sambal. Sometimes, simple is the best!

WHAT'S YOUR FAVOURITE COOKING HACK?

Garlic is one of my favourite aromatic ingredients when it comes to cooking. However, peeling it could be a bit of a chore when you need lots of them for your cooking! I always swear by this faster way to “shake off garlic skin”. First break the bulb of garlic into cloves and put in a metal salad bowl, cover with another bowl. Then, shake vigorously for a few seconds. Remove one bowl to reveal peeled cloves.

WHAT WORD WOULD YOU USE IF YOU COULD SUM UP FOOD IN ONE WORD?

Happiness and comfort (A bit cheeky as I can't make up my mind!)



Recipes

BROUGHT TO YOU BY **LEEMEI TAN-BOISGILLOT**

Korean Spicy Seafood

SERVES 4-6 | **PREP TIME** 45-60 mins, plus making the stock | **COOK TIME** 30 mins, plus cooking the noodles

INGREDIENTS

- 1 tbsp sesame seeds
- 15g dried wakame
- 500g mussels, scrubbed and debearded
- 1 tbsp sunflower oil
- 1 onion, sliced
- 3 garlic cloves, finely chopped
- 1cm piece of fresh ginger, peeled and finely chopped
- 4 dried shiitake mushrooms, soaked, drained and cut into thin strips
- 1 tbsp Korean red pepper powder or cayenne pepper
- 1 recipe quantity Chicken Stock
- ¼ Chinese cabbage, core removed and cut into bite-size pieces
- 1 tbsp light soy sauce
- 1 tbsp Chilli Oil
- 300g raw, peeled large king prawns/jumbo shrimp, tails left on, deveined
- 400g squid, scored with a crisscross pattern and cut into bite-size pieces
- 500g cooked fresh fine egg noodles or 350g dried fine egg noodles
- 2 spring onions/scallions, finely chopped

DIRECTIONS

1 | Heat a frying pan over a medium-high heat, then add the sesame seeds and dry-fry for a few minutes until the seeds begin to pop. Tip onto a plate and leave to one side.

2 | Soak the dried wakame in a small bowl in warm water for about 10 minutes until it rehydrates. Drain, rinse and leave to one side.

3 | Tap any mussels that are only partly opened and discard any that don't shut. Put the mussels in a saucepan over a high heat and steam for 3-4 minutes, or until the shells open. Discard any that don't open fully. There is no need to add any additional liquid to the pan, as the mussels will release their own liquid to steam in. Remove the mussels from their shells and leave to one side.

4 | Heat the sunflower oil in a large saucepan over a medium-high heat. Add the onion and cook for 2-3 minutes until soft and translucent, then add the garlic and ginger and cook for 2 minutes, or until fragrant. Add the shiitake mushrooms and

Korean red pepper powder and cook, stirring continuously, for 1 minute. Remove from the heat and add the chicken stock.

5 | Return the pan to the heat and bring the chicken stock to the boil. Add the Chinese cabbage and cook for 3-4 minutes until tender. Add the soy sauce and chilli oil and then add the prawns and squid. Bring to the boil for a few seconds, then reduce the heat to low, cover and simmer for 5-6 minutes, or until the prawns turn pink and are cooked through and the squid is tender. Three minutes before the end of cooking, add the mussels to heat through.

6 | Divide the hot, cooked noodles into deep soup bowls, then spoon the prawns, squid, cabbage and mussels into the bowls.

7 | Bring the chicken stock to a vigorous boil. Add the spring onions and prepared wakame to the bowls, then ladle in the piping hot stock. Sprinkle over the toasted sesame seeds and serve immediately.



Sweet Peanut & Sesame Balls

MAKES 20-22 BALLS | PREP TIME 50 mins | COOL TIME 20-30 mins

These little gems are generously coated with sesame seeds and have a gorgeous crispy base. The texture of the pastry is slightly chewy and the filling is smooth with crunchy bits from the peanuts. A classic sweet that is still a family favourite.

INGREDIENTS

- 70g caster/superfine sugar
- 320g glutinous rice flour, plus extra for dusting
- 100g skinless raw peanuts
- 80g granulated sugar
- 500ml sunflower oil, for deep-frying
- 60g sesame seeds
- 250ml water

TOP TIP

Make sure the oil doesn't get too hot when frying your sesame balls, so the seeds don't burn. Use a slotted spoon to push the balls down into the oil so they cook evenly.

DIRECTIONS

1 | Add the caster sugar to 250ml water and stir until dissolved. Put the glutinous rice flour into a large mixing bowl and make a well in the centre. Slowly pour in the sugared water and combine with the flour to form a soft dough. Turn the dough out onto a lightly floured surface, roll it into a cylinder and divide into 20-22 equal portions.

2 | Heat a frying pan over a medium-high heat, then add the peanuts and dry-roast until fragrant and starting to brown. Remove from the heat and roughly grind in a food

processor or blender - you want a fine powder with some chunky bits. Tip the ground peanuts into a bowl and add the granulated sugar, 2 tablespoons of the oil and 3 tablespoons of water. Stir into a rough paste and leave to one side.

3 | Fill a small bowl with water and pour the sesame seeds onto a small plate. Take a portion of the dough, shape it into a ball and then press into an 8cm disc. Flatten the edges so the centre of the disc is slightly thicker. Spoon 1-2 heaped teaspoons of the

peanut paste into the centre of the pastry, gather up the edges and shape into a ball. Repeat for the remaining peanut balls, then dip each ball in the water and coat with the sesame seeds.

4 | Heat the remaining oil in a deep, heavy-based saucepan to 170°C, or until a small piece of bread turns brown in 20 seconds. Gently slide 3-4 sesame balls into the oil and fry for 3-4 minutes until golden brown. Use a slotted spoon to remove the sesame balls from the oil and drain on paper towels. Repeat until all the balls are cooked. Serve hot or cold.